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Testimony of Dr. Eileen M. Denny, M.S., D.C., Dipl.Ac., DICCP

Raised Bill No. 5300

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN CHILDREN'S FOOD.

Good morning, Senator Bartolomeo and Representative Urban, Ranking Members Senator Martin and Representative Hampton and the distinguished members of the Committee on Children. My name is Dr. Eileen M. Denny. I am a board certified pediatric and prenatal chiropractor in Hamden. I also hold a Master's degree in human nutrition. I am not only providing testimony today as a healthcare professional, but also as the mother of four young children.

Connecticut has a well known history of passing legislation on safety issues that could impose threats to society, especially children. It is estimated that 2,694 children and teens were killed by guns in the United States in 2010 and an additional 15,576 were injured. In response to the violence, Connecticut implemented rigid gun laws. In the same time frame, traumatic brain injuries rose to a rate of 823.7 per 100,000. Again, Connecticut responded with passing legislation for greater education on prevention of these injuries. Both of the above listed statistics are tragic and heart breaking, but there was a legislative response in an attempt to limit any other child from suffering.

According to the last census, 22.9% of Connecticut population is under 18. We can assume that 100% of those children eat - many do so several times a day! Thus, they are exposed to GMO foods daily. It is estimated that on average an American adult eats approximately 193 lbs of genetically modified food per year. Data shows that children eat more corn flour and sweeteners per pound of body weight than adults. Given how much these ingredients tend to be derived from genetically engineered sources, kids are likely ingesting more genetically engineered food than adults. However, Connecticut has yet to pass any legislation regarding GMO foods, including labeling of products containing GMO items. Connecticut was on the forefront of the other issues, yet a blind eye has been turned to GMO foods and labeling.

What risks do children face when consuming genetically modified foods? Children are three to four times more prone to allergies than adults. Infants below two years old are at greatest risk-they have the highest incidence of reactions, especially to new allergens encountered in their diet. Even tiny amounts of allergens can sometimes cause reactions in children. Breast fed infants can be exposed via the mother's diet, and fetuses may possibly be exposed in the womb. Any baby food containing GM products could lead to a dramatic rise in allergies. Milk and dairy products from cows treated with the genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (rbGH) contain an increased amount of the hormone IGF-1, which is one of the highest risk factors associated with breast and prostate cancer. Genetic modification could alter

the nutritional benefits of the foods. The use of antibiotic resistant genes in food could potentially increase the risk of resistant strains of bacteria.

GMO foods have place us in an uncontrolled and unregulated experiment. Parents are kept in the dark when buying what they thought were healthy options for their children. Who would ever think that the sweet corn that you eat at a cookout has its own insecticide in it? Or that the zucchini is viral resistant and "All natural" doesn't really mean all natural just authentic corn genes or cow's milk etc., it means that it could contain genetically modified products.

I realize, that I did not offer any definitive proof of what could occur. This is because the true damage has yet to be assessed. It will take years to fully know and by then the damage will already be done and impact generations to come.

To quote a commercial from my childhood, "It's not nice to fool mother nature", nor is it nice to fool well intending parents attempting to provide real food for their children. We owe it to the children to ensure that genetically modified foods be labeled. Parents need to be informed about what it is exactly that they are feeding their children and themselves.

I hope that the Committee will pass Raised Bill 5300 as it supports educated consumerism - information is power! Let us not fall victim to the punitive nature of the "food" industry which values profit over people.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Committee.

